



Adventist Education

A JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE

STANDARDS FOR ACCREDITATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SCHOOLS

North American Division

Commission on Accreditation

Representing the Accrediting

Association of Seventh-day

Adventist Schools, Colleges,

and Universities, Inc.

2018

Preface

The *Standards for Accreditation of Seventh-day Adventist Schools* is the basis for continuous school improvement (CSI) evaluation and accreditation of all schools in the North American Division.

The standards are to be used by Seventh-day Adventist PreK-12 schools. Early Childhood Education and Care programs will use a separate accreditation document.

This instrument is the basis for the self-study. The instrument contains instructions and details the responsibilities for those persons and teams involved in the continuous school improvement evaluation process and for completing the self-study. The completed self-study instrument becomes the Self-study Report.



Philosophical Foundation of Adventist Education

PHILOSOPHY

The Seventh-day Adventist Church recognizes God as the ultimate source of existence, truth, and power. In the beginning God created in His image a perfect humanity, a perfection later marred by sin. Education in its broadest sense is a means of returning human beings to their original relationship with God. The distinctive characteristics of this Adventist worldview, built around creation, the fall, redemption, and re-creation, are derived from the Bible and the inspired writings of Ellen G. White.

The aim of true education is to restore human beings into the image of God as revealed by the life of Jesus Christ. Only through the guidance of the Holy Spirit can this be accomplished. An education of this kind imparts far more than academic knowledge. It fosters a balanced development of the whole person—spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social-emotional—a process that spans a lifetime. Working together, homes, schools, and churches cooperate with divine agencies to prepare learners to be good citizens in this world and for eternity.

MISSION

Collaborating for learning
excellence through
faith and service

VISION

For every learner to excel in
faith, learning, and service,
blending biblical truth and
academic achievement to
honor God and bless others.

Source: *The Core of Adventist Education Curriculum*



PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION

Core Goals

I. Learners will choose to accept God as the Creator and the Redeemer.

- **Acceptance of God:** Surrender one's whole life to God, develop a relationship with Jesus Christ, and allow the Holy Spirit to work in one's life. (J2E.1)

II. Learners will grow in their knowledge and understanding of God's creation.

- **Aesthetic Appreciation:** Develop an appreciation of the beautiful, both in God's creation and in human expression, while nurturing individual ability in the fine arts. (J2E.9)

III. Learners will creatively apply their spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social-emotional knowledge.

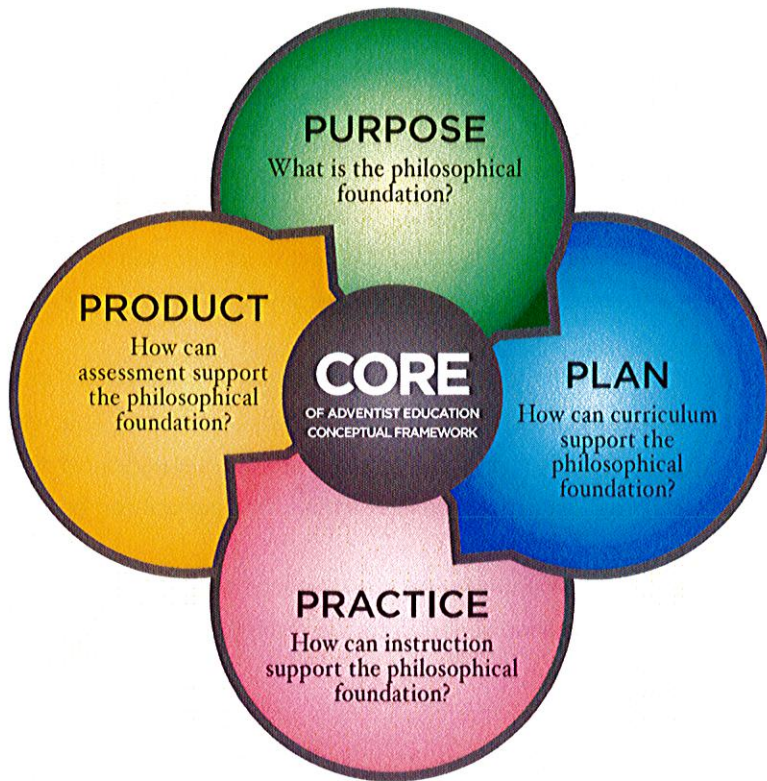
- **Healthful, Balanced Living:** Accept personal responsibility for achieving and maintaining optimum physical, mental, and spiritual health. (J2E.5)
- **Intellectual Development:** Adopt a systematic, logical, and biblically-based approach to decision making and problem solving when applied to a developing body of knowledge. (J2E.6)
- **Communication Skills:** Recognize the importance of effective communication and develop the requisite skills. (J2E.7)
- **Personal Management:** Function responsibly in the everyday world using Christian principles of stewardship, economy, and personal management. (J2E.8)
- **Interpersonal Relationships:** Develop a sense of self-worth, skills in interpersonal relationships, an understanding of the responsibilities of family membership, and the ability to respond with sensitivity to the needs of others. (J2E.3)

IV. Learners will demonstrate their commitment to the Creator through service to others.

- **Responsible Citizenship:** Develop an understanding of cultural and historical heritages; affirm a belief in the dignity and worth of others; and accept responsibility for local, national, and global environments. (J2E.4)
- **Commitment to the Church:** Desire to know, live, and share the message and mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (J2E.2)
- **Career and Service:** Develop a Christian work ethic with an appreciation for the dignity of service. (J2E.10)

J2E is Journey to Excellence

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION



The Core of Adventist Education

The CORE of Adventist Education Conceptual Framework includes four overlapping components, with accompanying essential questions:

- PURPOSE** What is the philosophical foundation?
- PLAN** How can curriculum support the philosophical foundation?
- PRACTICE** How can instruction support the philosophical foundation?
- PRODUCT** How can assessment support the philosophical foundation?

WHAT IS ACCREDITATION?

NAD Accreditation of Schools

The Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) is the denominational accrediting authority for all educational institutions operated in the name of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. It fosters close cooperation among the educational institutions of the Adventist system and effective working relationships with other educational organizations or institutions, accrediting agencies, and government departments of education.

The AAA provides a process by which the educational community holds an institution accountable for its own objectives. It assures the church and constituency that an accredited Adventist educational institution offers programs of quality to the youth of the church and provides professional personnel who meet both church and national/provincial standards. This process ensures a basis for reciprocity among Adventist schools.

The Standards for Accreditation of Seventh-day Adventist Schools are the basis for continuous school improvement evaluation and accreditation of all educational institutions in the North American Division.

The accreditation process:

- Assists each school in appraising the total program to determine the level to which the purposes and functions outlined in its statement of philosophy and goals for learner learning are accomplished, and the extent to which these purposes and functions address the standards for accreditation.
- Involves the administration, faculty, staff, local governing board, constituency, learners, and parents in a meaningful evaluation of the program.
- Provides an independent review of the Self-study Report.
- Informs the development or refinement of the CSI action plans to address areas needing improvement.
- Provides the basis for determining a term of accreditation.
- Assists in providing external validation with regional and/or national accrediting associations.

The North American Division Commission on Accreditation (NADCOA) serves as the agent of the AAA for accreditation of all schools in the North American Division. The duties and functions of the NADCOA are to:

1. Establish standards for quality education.
2. Adopt criteria, guidelines, and procedures for accreditation visits.
3. Periodically review the accreditation status of each school in the North American Division.
4. Determine the data to be collected for the periodic evaluation of schools.
5. Review the Visiting Team Report, determine the term of accreditation for each school, and forward recommendations to the AAA for final action.
6. Review appeals from schools regarding the recommendations of the Visiting Team.
7. Consider all matters referred to the NADCOA by the North American Division Office of Education, General Conference Department of Education, and/or the AAA.
8. Initiate, process, and revise reports, recommendations, and resolutions for action by the AAA.

WHY DOES ACCREDITATION MATTER?

Rationale for Accreditation Standards

"Every teacher should see to it that his work tends to definite results." (Education, p. 233)

"And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men." Colossians 3:23

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." Ecclesiastes 9:10

"The process of accreditation makes good schools better and great schools even greater. Equally important, it can place a poorly performing school on a path to improvement. Accreditation is what every school should be doing to help ensure that every learner gets the quality education they deserve."

(Henry G. Cram, Ed.D., President, MS-A-CESS)

"Accreditation is a quality seal. It provides an independent and external affirmation that a school meets the rigorous standards set by educational peers."

(Gary L. Wirt, Ed.D., Vice President, Goldey-Beacom College)

The continuous school improvement accreditation process provides all schools in the North American Division with a robust structure for reflecting upon programs and practices, raising quality, achieving excellence, and delivering better outcomes for our learners and their families. The Standards for Accreditation of Seventh-day Adventist Schools is a dynamic, researched-based tool designed to assist schools in the process of self-assessment that is context-specific, evidence-informed, and outcomes-focused. In this process, the instrument provides a focus through which schools evaluate the extent to which they are meeting stakeholder expectations, delivering on system, school, and community priorities, and implementing continuous school improvement goals and initiatives (Quality Adventist Schools Framework, 2013).

Fundamental to accreditation is the quality of the educational program experienced by our learners. Thus, the accreditation process is designed to address the following areas:

FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS & VALUES

The Core of Adventist Education is grounded in the worldview of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and school improvement should always be viewed through the lens of our core beliefs and values.

ATTAINMENT OF EXCELLENCE

Excellent schools demonstrate a commitment to ongoing self-assessment, evidence-informed practice, and continuous school improvement planning. Reflective practices assist schools to focus on important questions, such as: How can this school better demonstrate and integrate its faith and philosophy? How can this school help learners become successful learners and informed citizens? How can this school support quality teaching and leadership? How can this school develop and sustain strong partnerships? How can this school improve outcomes for all learners?

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Achieving excellence requires a commitment to continuous improvement and quality assurance with energies and resources directed towards the improvement of teaching and learning within a standards-based framework. Rather than a single event that recurs every six years, continuous school improvement is an ongoing, annual process that demonstrates commitment as opposed to compliance.

WHY DOES ACCREDITATION MATTER?

Standards for Accreditation

Standards are ideals for quality educational programs that are specific, attainable, and measurable. They describe an effective program that leads to continuous school improvement and results in improved student learning.

Standards for Accreditation of Seventh-day Adventist Schools have been established for the four domains: Purpose, Plan, Practice, Product. These domains identify the Core of Adventist Education (see page VI) and are in alignment with A Journey to Excellence and The Core of Adventist Education Curriculum. The Standards offer a shared vision of Seventh-day Adventist education, but to make the vision real, the details must be constructed uniquely and personally, within particular communities of learners. Thus, quality educational programs may look very different from one another. In the same way, good educational programs should find many pathways to help our learners meet high standards, so that they can effectively achieve academic success and become effective witnesses of the mission of the church.

I: PURPOSE

1. **Philosophy and Mission**—The philosophy, mission, and vision statements are learner-centered and give direction to the school's program, and are developed and approved cooperatively by the administration, staff, and school board and reflect the Seventh-day Adventist worldview, core values, and educational philosophy.

II: PLAN

2. **Curriculum**—The curriculum is the core of the educational program providing for the spiritual, mental, physical, social, and emotional development of learners and preparing them for this world and for eternity.
3. **Instruction**—The instructional program is aligned with curriculum design and assessment practices and provides for a variety of learning experiences, consistent with the school's philosophy, goals, and standards and actively engages learners in learning.
4. **Assessment**—Assessment data informs changes in curriculum and instruction to support learning.

III: PRACTICE

5. **Sustainable Leadership**—Administration and school board ensure the effective and successful operation of the school to promote learner success and well-being.
6. **School Environment**—The school environment is designed and maintained to promote learner learning and to support the school's mission and goals.
7. **Professional Learning**—Administration and faculty collaborate to develop and implement professional learning opportunities to meet the needs of each learner and enhance the ongoing growth and development of school personnel.
8. **Communication and Collaboration**—Communication and collaboration among the school, constituency, and community are essential to providing an effective educational program for learners.

IV: PRODUCT

9. **School Improvement**—The accreditation process assists a school in appraising the total program to determine the level to which the purposes and functions outlined in its statement of philosophy and goals for learner learning are accomplished as well as in providing the basis for action plans to address areas needing improvement.



WHY DOES ACCREDITATION MATTER?

Alignment of Standards with Co-Accrediting Organizations

AAA STANDARDS (2014)	NCPSA STANDARDS (2010)	MSA-CESS STANDARDS (2013)	WASC STANDARDS (2014)
<p>I: PURPOSE Philosophy and Mission</p>	<p>I: Philosophy, Governance, and Administration</p>	<p>STANDARD I: Mission</p>	<p>A. Organization for Student Learning: 1. School Purpose</p>
<p>II: PLAN Curriculum Instruction Assessment</p>	<p>III: Curriculum</p>	<p>STANDARD VIII: Educational Program</p> <p>STANDARD XI: Learner Life and Activities</p>	<p>B. Curriculum and Instruction: 1. What Students Learn 2. How Students Learn 3. How Assessment Is Used</p>
<p>III: PRACTICE Sustainable Leadership School Environment • Learning Climate • Health and Safety • School Facilities • Information Resources and Technology Professional Learning Communication and Collaboration</p>	<p>II: Personnel IV: Nutrition and Food Services V: Physical Environment VI: Health and Safety VII: Family and Community Relations</p>	<p>STANDARD X: Learner Services</p> <p>STANDARD VII: Health/Safety</p> <p>STANDARD XII: Information Resources</p> <p>STANDARD II: Governance and Leadership</p> <p>STANDARD IV: Finances</p> <p>STANDARD VI: School Climate/Organization</p>	<p>A. Organization for Student Learning: 2. Governance 3. School Leadership 4. Staff 5. School Environment</p> <p>C. Support for Learner Personal and Academic Growth: 1. Learner Connectedness 2. Parent/Community Involvement</p> <p>D. Resource Management and Development: 1. Resources 2. Resource Planning</p>
<p>IV: PRODUCT School Improvement</p>	<p>III: Curriculum</p>	<p>STANDARD III: School Improvement Planning</p> <p>STANDARD V: Facilities</p> <p>STANDARD IX: Assessment and Evidence of Learning</p>	<p>A. Organization for Student Learning: 6. Reporting Learner Progress 7. School Improvement Process</p> <p>B. Curriculum and Instruction</p>

AAA is Accrediting Association of Seventh-day Adventist Schools, Colleges, and Universities, Inc.

NCPSA is National Council for Private School Accreditation

MSA-CESS is Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools - Commission on Elementary and Secondary Schools

WASC is National Western Association of Schools and Colleges

Note: In Canada, education is a provincial rather than federal responsibility. In many provinces, both public and independent K-12 schools are inspected and approved by the provincial Ministry of Education to ensure high levels of quality throughout the province. Specific provincial accreditation standards can be found on each provincial government's education website. In most provinces, Seventh-day Adventist schools must meet the rigorous accreditation standards of both the provincial Ministry of Education and the Adventist Accrediting Association.

HOW DO WE PROCEED WITH ACCREDITATION?

NAD Accreditation Cycle



HOW DO WE PROCEED WITH ACCREDITATION?

Continuous School Improvement Chart

		ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	
Where are we now?	Demographics District Schools Students Staffs	WHO ARE WE?	
	Community Perceptions Culture Climate Values and Beliefs	HOW DO WE DO BUSINESS?	
	Student Learning Summative Formative Diagnostic	HOW ARE OUR STUDENTS DOING?	
	School Processes Programs Instructional Organizational Administrative Continuous Improvement	WHAT ARE OUR PROCESSES?	
		WHAT'S WORKING? WHAT'S NOT WORKING?	Contributing Causes Predictive Analytics How did we get here?
Where do we want to be?	Mission Purpose	WHY DO WE EXIST?	
	Vision Goals Learning Standards	WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?	
		HOW CAN WE GET TO WHERE WE WANT TO BE? HOW WILL WE IMPLEMENT?	Continuous Improvement Plan Objectives Strategies Activities Budget Implementation Strategies Leadership Structures Collaborative Strategies Professional Learning Partnerships How do we get to where we want to be?
Is this working?	Formative and Summative Evaluation	HOW WILL WE EVALUATE OUR EFFORTS?	

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HOW DO WE PROCEED WITH ACCREDITATION?

Overview of Roles and Responsibilities

The success of the continuous school improvement evaluation process depends upon the cooperative efforts of the following: school board, principal, teachers, parents, learners, members of constituent churches, and personnel from the union and local conference offices of education. The primary responsibilities of those involved in the accreditation process are indicated below.

1. NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION

The North American Division Commission on Accreditation is responsible for establishing and voting guidelines, criteria, and procedures for the evaluation of schools, as well as vote terms of accreditation. It officially represents the AAA in the North American Division.

2. NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION OFFICE OF EDUCATION

This office is responsible for supervising the accreditation process and for providing professional learning in continuous school improvement planning in PreK-12 schools. The vice president for education serves as chair of the NADCOA.

3. UNION CONFERENCE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

The responsibility of this office is to in-service the local conference office of education and school personnel on continuous school improvement planning and the evaluation process. The union conference office of education is responsible for overall supervision of the evaluation process for junior and senior academies in the union conference.

4. LOCAL CONFERENCE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

This office is responsible for overall supervision of continuous school improvement planning and the evaluation process for the elementary schools in the conference and for reviewing and approving self-study documents before distribution to the Visiting Team.

5. PRINCIPAL

As the agent of the school board, the principal is responsible for organizing and supervising continuous school improvement planning and the self-study process at the school.

6. SCHOOL BOARD

The local school board is responsible for appointing the Coordinating Team and providing support to the principal and teams in the preparation of the Continuous School Improvement Plan and Self-study Report. This school board is to review and approve the Continuous School Improvement Plan and the Self-study Report, including all action plans.

HOW DO WE PROCEED WITH ACCREDITATION?

OVERVIEW OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (CONTINUED)

7. COORDINATING TEAM

The Coordinating Team is composed of the principal and representatives from the Standards Assessment Teams (SAT) and school board. It is responsible for:

- a. Appointing 3-5 members to serve on each SAT.
- b. Coordinating and monitoring the self-study process to ensure completion of the Self-study Report according to an approved time line.
- c. Analyzing data to identify and build consensus on significant school-wide areas needing improvement.
- d. Overseeing the development of continuous school improvement action plans.
- e. Establishing an ongoing follow-up process to monitor the implementation, refinement, and fulfillment of action plans.

8. STANDARDS ASSESSMENT TEAMS

The Standards Assessment Teams are composed of staff, parents, and school board members and are responsible for assessing the school in the nine standards which are the core of the evaluation process. Team members should be knowledgeable of continuous school improvement planning as well as of the mission, operation, successes, and challenges of the school and qualified representatives from the varying grade levels should be included as team members.

9. VISITING TEAM

The Visiting Team is responsible for:

- a. Preparing for the on-site visit by reading and analyzing the Self-study Report for the purpose of drafting preliminary responses and recommendations.
- b. Validating the Self-study Report by observing the school in operation; visiting classes; and interviewing administrators, teachers, learners, and others.
- c. Preparing a report that, validates the self-study report and action plans, as well as recommends specific actions to support continuous school improvement.
- d. Recommending a term of accreditation based on the Self-study Report, the Continuous School Improvement Plan, and on-site findings.

